

Message Text

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ACTION OES-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NSF-02 H-02 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 /048 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7429

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FOR OES

PASS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

PASS CONGRESSMAN DADDARIO, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE OF
TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN

SUBJ: UK PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY PRESS RELEASE, JANUARY 16, 1975

1. PRESS RELEASE AND FIRST 1975 MEETING BY THE UK
PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
SCIENCE SUB-COMMITTEE INDICATES THAT DURING THE FORTH-
COMING YEAR THE SUB-COMMITTEE WILL INVESTIGATE UNIVERSITY
FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE WORK OF THE SCIENCE
RESEARCH COUNCIL AND THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE.
PRESS RELEASE TEXT FOLLOWS: QUOTE. THE SCIENCE
SUB-COMMITTEE WILL BE ENQUIRING INTO THE FINANCING OF
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN BRITISH UNIVERSITIES, AND THE
MAJOR EFFECTS OF THE SYSTEM FOR DISTRIBUTING GRANTS ON
SCIENTIFIC MANPOWER.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE WILL CONCENTRATE THEIR ENQUIRIES
WITHIN THE UNIVERSITIES ON THE SYSTEM FOR FINANCING
RESEARCH BY THE RESEARCH COUNCILS (AND IN PARTICULAR,
THE SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL), THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS
COMMITTEE, INDUSTRY AND OTHER SOURCES. THEY WILL BE
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EXAMINING THE SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE SRC BOARDS TO

UNIVERSITY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FROM 1969-70 TO 1973-74 WHICH AMOUNTED IN THE LATTER YEAR TO APPROXIMATELY 33 PERCENT OF THEIR EXPENDITURE. THIS COVERED ENGINEERING (12 PERCENT), ASTRONOMY, SPACE AND RADIO (2 PERCENT), NUCLEAR PHYSICS (4 PERCENT), AND SCIENCE (I.E. BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, MATHEMATICS, NEUTRON BEAMS AND OTHER PHYSICS) (APPROX. 15 PERCENT). THE SUB-COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER THE METHOD OF ALLOCATING THESE FUNDS BY THE BOARDS, TOGETHER WITH THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO UNIVERSITY SCIENCE THROUGH THE SRC'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL FACILITIES SUCH AS CERN (AMOUNTING TO 31 PERCENT OF SRC EXPENDITURE IN 1973-74) AND THE SRC'S OWN ESTABLISHMENTS SUCH AS THE RUTHERFORD, APPLETON AND DARESBUURY LABORATORIES AND THE OBSERVATORIES (31 PERCENT IN 1973-74). THE SUB-COMMITTEE ARE AWARE OF THE PROPOSALS TO REGROUP ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SRC'S ESTABLISHMENTS, AND WILL WANT TO CONSIDER HOW SUCH A REGROUPING IS LIKELY TO EFFECT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE FUTURE. THE SUB-COMMITTEE HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE AWARE OF THE SERIOUS CRISIS IN FINANCE FOR UNIVERSITY RESEARCH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION ON DEPARTMENTAL FUNDS. IN THIS CONNECTION THEY WILL BE CONSIDERING THE EXCHEQUER GRANTS MADE TO UNIVERSITIES ON THE ADVICE OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE, AND WILL BE HOLDING TALKS WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE. THEY ARE CONTEMPLATING THE PREPARATION OF AN INTERIM REPORT TO DEAL WITH THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF THE EROSION OF THE UGC COMPONENT IN RESEARCH FUNDING.

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THE SUB-COMMITTEE INTEND TO FOLLOW ON FROM THE MASSEY REPORT OF 1971 IN DISCUSSING THE SYSTEM OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH; TO CONSIDER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE SYSTEM; AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE CONCLUSION OF THE MASSEY REPORT WERE JUSTIFIED IN PRACTICE. THE ENQUIRY WILL BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF SIR HARRIE MASSEY'S GROUP BY CONSIDERING IN MORE DETAIL THE AREA OF ACTIVITY OF ONLY ONE OF THE RESEARCH COUNCILS, AND BY CONCENTRATING ON THE VIEWS OF PRACTISING UNIVERSITY SCIENTISTS. ACCORDINGLY THE SUB-COMMITTEE INTEND TO VISIT AS MANY UNIVERSITIES AS POSSIBLE, AND TO TAKE EVIDENCE CHIEFLY (BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY) FROM THE INDIVIDUAL UNIVERSITIES.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE SRC WAS DESCRIBED IN THE COUNCIL'S MOST RECENT ANNUAL REPORT AS INNER QUOTE TO SUSTAIN STANDARDS OF RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES END INNER QUOTE WHICH WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE COUNCIL'S INNER QUOTE GENERAL ROLE OF ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE AND MAINTAINING THE FABRIC OF SCIENCE IN THE BIOLOGICAL, ENGINEERING AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES END INNER QUOTE. THE SUB-COMMITTEE'S AIM IS TO CONSIDER HOW EFFECTIVELY THESE PURPOSES ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE SYSTEM FOR THE FINANCING OF RESEARCH BY THE SRC AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SOURCES. UNQUOTE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, RESEARCH, FINANCIAL STABILITY, PRESS RELEASES, COMMITTEE MEETINGS, UNIVERSITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON00871
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750021-0432
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750137/aaaabgvf.tel
Line Count: 152
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 NOV 2003 by MaustMC>; APPROVED <25 Nov 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UK PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRESS RELEASE, JANUARY 16, 1975
TAGS: TGEN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006